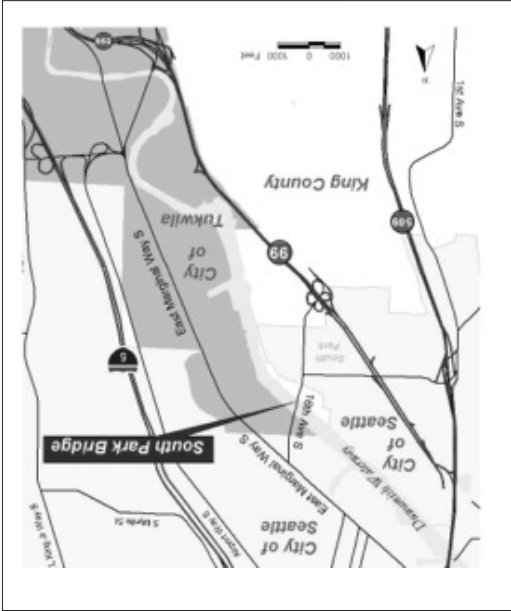


website: [www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/roads/projects/projects/southparkbridge/](http://www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/roads/projects/projects/southparkbridge/) more about the South Park Bridge project on the King County Coordinator, at (206) 329-8272 or [cschorr@nwlink.com](mailto:cschorr@nwlink.com). Or, find out people with disabilities, contact Celia Schorr, Community *Questions? Comments?* For more information or accommodations for

For information in alternative formats, call (206) 329-8272 (voice) or (206) 684-1682 (TTY). Para esta información en español, llámeda (206) 329-8272 (voice) or (206) 684-1682 (TTY).



INSIDE: South Park Bridge Report updates the EIS process

### King County's South Park Bridge Environmental Study:

## Highlights of five bridge alternatives studied in the EIS

This list highlights the main characteristics of each of the five alternatives under review in the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the South Park Bridge.

#### No Action Alternative

- Required by NEPA & SEPA regulations
- Would mean eventual bridge closure and removal
- Diverted traffic would increase area congestion
- Unlimited vertical navigation clearance

#### Rehabilitation Alternative

- Retains character of the existing bridge
- Unlimited vertical navigation clearance
- Bridge closed a minimum of 24 months during construction

- Bridge would reopen with three widened lanes rather than four
- One of two recommended alternatives from the CAG

#### Moveable Bascule Bridge Alternative

- Most effective moveable bridge design
- Unlimited vertical navigation clearance
- No closure of existing bridge during construction
- Limited impacts to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.
- One of two recommended alternatives from the CAG

#### Fixed Mid-Level Bridge Alternative

- Limited vertical navigation clearance (approx. 65 ft.)
- Upriver businesses may be impacted
- No closure of existing bridge during construction

- Significant impacts to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.
- Satisfies FHWA requirements to analyze fixed-span bridge

#### Fixed High-Level Bridge Alternative

- Limited vertical navigation clearance (approx. 100 ft.)
- Meets current Coast Guard navigation requirements
- No closure of existing bridge during construction
- Greatest impacts to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.
- Satisfies FHWA requirements to analyze fixed-span design

*Questions? Comments?* For more information or accommodations for people with disabilities, contact Celia Schorr, Community Coordinator, at (206) 329-8272 or [cschorr@nwlink.com](mailto:cschorr@nwlink.com).

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King County Department of Transportation  
Road Services Division

# South Park Bridge Report

South Park Bridge Environmental Impact Statement Progress Report

November 30, 2002



## The EIS Process for the South Park Bridge

### Local residents, businesses provide important public input

After many years of deterioration and more recent earthquake damage, it's necessary to find a permanent solution for the South Park Bridge.

In October 2001, King County began the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process that will help King County select an appropriate bridge alternative that addresses potential impacts and issues identified by local communities, residents, businesses, and government agencies.

### What's been completed, so far

Early in January 2002, a well-attended public workshop introduced the South Park Bridge EIS process to the community and interested organizations and agencies. Information in both English and Spanish—which is a native language for about 30% of people living in the South Park neighborhood—was mailed to 8,000 residents and businesses in the area. Public comment forms were widely distributed.

**Scoping:** A “scoping” meeting was held in February 2002 to gain public input about the scope of issues to be studied in the EIS process. Additional scoping information was also provided by a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) representing King County, Tukwila,

Seattle and other state and federal agencies with funding or permitting responsibilities for the South Park Bridge project. The PAC will continue to meet throughout the EIS process.

**Determining Alternatives for Study:** Information from the scoping process was combined with preliminary engineering studies and input from the PAC to review a broad array of possible bridge alternatives and screening criteria. The South Park Bridge Community Advisory Group (CAG) also participated in the review. The resulting five alternatives (see *Highlights*, page 4) were presented at an open house on June 19, 2002.

### What happens next?

The five bridge alternatives are now being thoroughly studied for inclusion in the Draft EIS planned for public review in June 2003.

**Preparing the Draft EIS:** Over the next few months, technical studies of the bridge alternatives will look at environmental impacts on water resources and fish habitat, as well as community and economic impacts. These will be used to prepare the Draft EIS. Particular attention will be given to public

(Continued, page two)

## Community Advisory Group acts as sounding board for bridge project

With projects of this scope, the King County Roads Services Division regularly recruits local residents and business representatives to serve on a Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG acts as a sounding board, assisting staff in reviewing project alternatives and providing important community input.

### Community Advisory Group meets with technical team, prefers moveable span solution

The South Park Bridge Project CAG has met several times to learn about the various alternatives for replacing or rehabilitating the existing bridge. CAG members shared their perspectives on which alternatives should be studied to best meet the needs of the South Park community. Their views were incorporated in the process of selecting the five alternatives that would receive further study as part of the Environmental Impact Statement process.

CAG members overwhelmingly noted that the best options from the perspective of the community were either (1) building a new moveable bascule span, similar to the existing bridge, or (2) rehabilitating the existing structure. CAG members also felt strongly that they could not support fixed-span options for replacing the South Park Bridge.

The CAG will continue to meet periodically throughout the EIS process, receiving updates on the project, providing community insights on planning efforts, and offering ideas on appropriate mitigation for impacts from each of the bridge alternatives.

# Public input is an important part of the EIS process

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process is designed to thoroughly document impacts to both the natural and built environments around a given project, and to analyze possible ways to “mitigate” any negative impacts resulting from the various alternatives under study.

In order to realize these goals, governments must involve local residents and community stakeholders. This is particularly true for a project like South Park Bridge, where interests are so diverse that considerable impact is likely to result no matter which alternative is selected.

The project team from King County is well aware not only of the complexity of the South Park Bridge project, but also of and the varied interests of the people who live or do business close by or who depend in other ways on the bridge and the river.

## EIS depends on public input

It takes more than one or two public meetings to properly reach out and involve the community and other South Park stakeholders. In addition to meeting with area residents and business owners, the project team has reached out to tribes who fish in the Duwamish, businesses who transport goods on the river, commuters who use the bridge to get to work, and various agencies responsible for the environmental quality of the river and the commercial vitality of the neighborhood.

A properly thorough EIS process ultimately depends on involvement and feedback from a broad array of community members and stakeholders. In this connection, it is vital that the community identify goals and plans for its neighborhood and business

### South Park Bridge Community Advisory Group (CAG) Members

| NAME             | AFFILIATION   |
|------------------|---|
| Mayra Ayala      | South Park resident; Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS) |
| Geoff Belau      | South Park resident; South Park Library steering committee            |
| Charlie Cunliff  | Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS)                      |
| Juan Garcia      | South Park Boxing; Latino Health Task Force                           |
| Doug Greason     | Delta Marine  |
| Charlie Harris   | South Park property owner   |
| Leah Hyatt-Porco | Napoli Pizza owner  |
| Ron Johnson      | North Highline UAC; South Park Bridge commuter                        |
| Mark Leatham     | Glacier Northwest, Inc.   |
| Anna Marti       | South Park resident; South Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA)       |
| Pat McGarry      | Manson Construction; Marine Industrial Council                        |
| Tim McNeil       | South Park resident; South Park Area Redevelopment Committee (SPARC)  |
| Adrian Moroles   | Sea Mar Community Health Center                                       |
| Jordan Perrine   | Highline Historical Society   |
| Michael Prime    | Boulevard Park Community Council; South Park Bridge commuter          |
| Eugene Wasserman | South Park Business Association (SPBA)                                |
| Richard White    | Boeing  |

district. This information plays a key role in identifying potential ways to reduce or avoid adverse impacts from the project. Ideally, the alternative selected will reflect the goals of both the project and the local community. The South Park Bridge

team is continuing to involve the public throughout the EIS process in order to achieve that result.

## The EIS Process for the South Park Bridge

(Continued from page 1)

comment and issues raised during the scoping process.

**Issuing the Draft EIS:** With input from the PAC and CAG, the Draft EIS will be released in the spring of 2003 and a 45-day written comment period follows. A public hearing is planned for June 2003. Responses to comments received during the Draft EIS comment period will be included in the Final EIS.

**Selection of a Preferred Alternative:** King County will use information in the Draft EIS, input from the CAG, and consultation with the PAC prior to making its selection of a preferred bridge alternative.

**Issuing the Final EIS:** In addition to presenting the preferred alternative, the Final EIS will provide a summary evaluation of the five alternatives, including responses to comments received on the Draft EIS. Mitigation measures required to address significant adverse impacts identified during the process will be outlined. There is no public comment process for the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

**Record of Decision (ROD):** Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the EIS process is not complete until a Record of Decision (ROD) is issued. This requires the Final EIS to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and by other agencies regarding compliance with historic preservation and the Endangered Species Act. King County plans to issue the ROD by the end of 2003.

**After the EIS:** The environmental analysis and preliminary engineering in the EIS will provide a basis for the design and permit-

(Continued, next column)

## Why so many bridge alternatives?

In compiling and evaluating the five alternatives to be studied during the Environmental Impact Statement review process, King County Road Services has had to consider an unusual array of complex factors. No other King County bridge faces such a complicated arrangement of jurisdictional, environmental, economic, and community considerations.

The South Park Bridge project must address the concerns or regulatory requirements of several different governmental entities, which include:

- King County and the City of Tukwila, who currently co-own the bridge;
- the City of Seattle, which has been negotiating with King County regarding potential ownership and operation of the rehabilitated or newly built bridge;
- Seattle’s South Park neighborhood
- the National Marine Fisheries Services and the US Fish & Wildlife Service, which will restrict the size and location of in-water structures based on the Endangered Species Act;
- the Muckleshoot Tribe, with interests regarding impact on fish, habitat, and access to treaty fishing areas in the vicinity of the bridge;
- the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which requires that the EIS for the bridge include study of a fixed-span alternative;
- the US Coast Guard, which requires that the selected alternative maintain

sufficient navigability of the waterway beneath the bridge before issuing a permit; and

- other federal and state permitting agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## Diverse neighborhood concerns, regional transportation impacts

In addition to regulatory concerns, King County also has an exceptionally diverse “bridge community” to serve. South Park Bridge is located in a neighborhood of homes and businesses and spans the Duwamish River downstream from marine businesses that depend on the river for their survival. So the bridge project must impact the surrounding community as little as possible while being either moveable or high enough to allow the businesses upstream to remain viable.

Further, the bridge is an important part of the regional transportation network. The role the South Park Bridge plays in the region requires that its “community” include not only those who live near it but also those in the region who depend on it for transportation or commerce. King County is working hard to balance all of these overlapping and sometimes competing concerns.

## Strong EIS can help King County’s effort to secure available bridge construction funding

King County also faces some uncertainty about funding available to construct the alternative that is ultimately selected. Any alternative will need to compete with other transportation priorities in the region for limited financial resources. A rigorous EIS process that considers a reasonable range of feasible alternatives will help strengthen King County’s efforts to secure the necessary funding for the chosen alternative.

Finally, King County is under a challenging deadline imposed by the condition of the present bridge. The EIS process is long and detailed. Meanwhile, the South Park Bridge continues to suffer significant deterioration that could result in the closure of the bridge if ongoing repairs cannot maintain its reliable operation.

## Tour of South Park Bridge shows help is needed now

Community Advisory Group members began their service by touring the South Park Bridge, from the bottom up. Age and earthquake damage are affecting the span.

